

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An online merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

receive through an online retail computer system of a particular online merchant, an indication of a shipment of an at least one item of merchandise purchased by the consumer through the online retail computer system;

in response to the indication of shipment, designate the at least one item as a returnable item;

receive through the online retail computer system a request by the consumer for an identification of returnable items;

in response to the request, generate a display through the online retail computer system to [[a]]the consumer of the a purchase-identification of returnable items, wherein said purchase the identification of returnable items comprises an identification of [[an]]the at least one item of merchandise purchased by the consumer using an online computer system, and further comprises a respective interactive means associated with each respective item of merchandise identified in the purchase identification of returnable items, wherein each respective interactive means is adapted for designating a return of each respective item of merchandise identified in the purchase identification of returnable items;

receive a merchandise return request by the consumer to return at least one item of merchandise, wherein the merchandise return request comprises a designation of a particular respective interactive means associated with a particular respective item of merchandise identified in the purchase identification of returnable items; and

process said merchandise return request according to a set of return policy rules input to the online merchandise return computer system by a merchant.

2. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 1, wherein a subset of the return policy rules input by the merchant compris[ing]es:
 - a set of return questions;
 - a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions; and
 - a set of return response rules, each return response rule corresponding to at least one of said anticipated return question responses.
3. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 2, wherein each return response rule compris[ing]es a set of instructions to direct said computer system to perform an action to process the return request.
4. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 3, wherein each set of return questions compris[ing]es a first return question and a set of subsequent return questions, said first return question having a corresponding set of anticipated first []return question responses and each of said subsequent return questions having a corresponding set of anticipated subsequent return question responses.
5. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 4, the computer system further programmed to:
 - select from the return policy rules set by the merchant [[the]]a first selected return questions; and
 - display to the user [[a]]the first selected return question.
6. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 5, the computer system further programmed to:
 - receive user input of a return reason ~~question answer~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 6, the computer system further programmed to:

compare said return reason ~~question answer~~ to each of the anticipated first return question responses.

8. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 7, the computer system further programmed to:

identify an anticipated first return reason question response that matches said return reason ~~question answer~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 8, the computer system further programmed to:

direct the computer system to process the return request in accordance with the return question response rules that correspond to the anticipated first return question response that matches said return reason ~~question answer~~.

10. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim ~~[[9]]~~1, wherein the return policy rules ~~further compris[[ing]]~~e a selection of carriers and a selection of delivery services with which a consumer can ship a return package.

11. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 10, the computer system further programmed to:

calculate a shipping rate for a package specified by the return request of the consumer for each delivery service of the select[[ed]]ion of delivery services offered by each carrier of the select[[ed]]ion of carriers according to a set of pricing rules for each carrier of the select[[ed]]ion of carriers for each delivery service of the select[[ed]]ion of delivery services.

12. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 11, the computer system further programmed to:

generate a display of an interactive graphic comparison of shipping rates for the return request for shipping the particular package for each delivery service of the select~~ion~~ion of delivery services offered by each carrier of the select~~ion~~ion of carriers.

13. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 12 wherein the interactive graphic shipping rate comparison display compris~~es~~es an array.

14. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 13 wherein said array compris~~es~~es a plurality of cells.

15. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 14 wherein each of said cells compris~~es~~es an intersection of a delivery date and time for a particular carrier for a particular delivery service.

16. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 15, the computer system further programmed to:

receive as a return order, user input of a selection of one of the cells of the array.

17. (Original) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 16, the computer system further programmed to:

generate an internal system tracking number for the return order; and
save said internal system tracking number for the return order in a database.

18. (Original) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 17, the computer system further programmed to:

generate a graphic representation of a shipping label corresponding to the return order; and

display the graphic representation of the shipping label on a display monitor connected to a computer accessible by the consumer.

19. (Original) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 18, the computer system further programmed to:

generate a set of printable shipping label data in response to a shipping label print request by the consumer.

20. (Original) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 19, the computer system further programmed to:

send in response to a user request to print a shipping label the set of printable shipping label data to a printer connected to the computer accessible by the user.

21. (Original) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 20, wherein each return order with a tracking number is characterized by a shipping status, the computer system further programmed to:

generate a tracking report record depicting the shipping status of a return order in response to a user tracking report request for said return order.

22. (Currently Amended) An online merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

~~save a set of return policy rules input by a merchant in a database; and~~
~~receive a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one an~~
~~item of merchandise to the merchant, wherein the merchandise return request~~
~~comprises an indication of at least one the item of merchandise in a list of a plurality of~~
~~items of merchandise that the consumer purchased from the merchant using an online~~
~~computer system, and further comprises an indication by the consumer of a credit card~~
~~account for paying a purchase amount for purchasing the item of merchandise;~~
receive an indication of receipt of the item of merchandise by the merchant; and
in response to receiving the indication of receipt of the item of merchandise by
the merchant, credit the credit card account for a return amount.

23. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 22, said computer system further programmed to:

process ~~[[said]]~~the merchandise return request according to ~~[[said]]~~a set of return policy rules.

24. (Currently Amended) An online merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

collect a set of return policy rules input by a merchant, wherein the set of return policy rules comprises an indication by the merchant of a set of carriers that are selected by the merchant for shipping returns ~~general return policy rules and at least one exception policy rule; [[and]]~~

save ~~[[said]]~~the set of return policy rules in a database;

receive a merchandise return request by a consumer to return to a merchant an item of merchandise; and

in response to the merchandise return request, generate a display to the consumer of the set of carriers as identified by the merchant according to the return policy rules.

25. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 24, said computer system further programmed to:

~~receive a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise~~generate a display of rates for return shipment of the item of merchandise by each delivery service provided by each carrier of the set of carriers.

26. (Currently Amended) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim ~~[[25]]~~22, said computer system further programmed to:

~~process said merchandise return request according to said set of return policy rules~~wherein the return amount is selected from a group consisting of: 1) the purchase amount, and 2) a refund amount that is calculated by subtracting from the purchase amount, shipping charges for return shipping of the item of merchandise.

27. (Previously Presented) An online merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

receive a merchandise return request by a consumer to return to a merchant, an at least one item of merchandise;

generate, in response to said merchandise return request, a display of an interactive graphic comparison of shipping rates for the return request for shipping a package containing the at least one item of merchandise to be returned, said display showing a respective shipping rate for each respective service of a set of services offered by each respective carrier of a set of carriers, wherein the set of carriers and the set of services are selected by the computer system for display according to a set of return policy rules input by the merchant, and wherein each respective shipping rate is calculated by the computer system according to information about the at least one item of merchandise that is accessible by the computer system; and

process said merchandise return request according to the set of return policy rules input by the merchant.

28. (Withdrawn) An online merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to save a set of return policy rules input by a merchant in a database as a three-dimensional situation response matrix, said matrix comprising:

a first dimension defining a set of return questions;

a second dimension defining, for each return question, a set of return question responses corresponding to the return question; and

a third dimension defining, for each return question response for each return question, a set of instructions to the computer system corresponding to the return question response corresponding to the return question.

29. (Withdrawn) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 28, said computer system further programmed to:

receive a merchandise return request input by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise; and

script an interactive exchange with the consumer in response to said merchandise return request according to the three-dimensional situation response matrix.

30. (Withdrawn) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 29, said computer system further programmed to:

- display a first question from said set of return questions;
- receive a first answer input by the consumer in response to said first question;
- select from the set of return question responses corresponding to the first question a return question response that corresponds to the first answer; and
- direct the computer system to execute each instruction in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the first answer.

31. (Withdrawn) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 30, wherein one of the instructions in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the first answer is to ask a next question from said set of return questions.

32. (Withdrawn) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 31, said computer system further programmed to:

- display the next question from said set of return questions;
- receive a next answer input by the consumer in response to said next question;
- select from the set of return question responses corresponding to the next question a return question response that corresponds to the next answer; and
- direct the computer system to execute each instruction in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the next answer.

33. (Withdrawn) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 30, said computer system further programmed to:

process said merchandise return request according to the set of instructions corresponding to the return question responses corresponding to each answer by the consumer to each return question asked by the computer system.

34. (Withdrawn) An online merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

display a question from a set of return questions;

receive an answer input by a consumer in response to said question;

select from a set of return question responses corresponding to the question a return question response that corresponds to the answer; and

direct the computer system to execute each instruction in a set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the answer.

35. (Withdrawn) An online merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

process a merchandise return request by a consumer according to a set of instructions that correspond to a set of return question responses that correspond to each answer by the consumer to each return question asked by the computer system.

36. (Withdrawn) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 35, said computer system further programmed to:

recognize merchandise to be returned by the consumer according to product categories and product subcategories.

37. (Withdrawn) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 36, said computer system further programmed to:

execute exception instructions for merchandise comprising an exception product category.

38. (Withdrawn) The online merchandise return computer system of Claim 36, said computer system further programmed to:

execute exception instructions for merchandise comprising an exception product subcategory.

39. (Currently Amended) A method using a computer for online merchandise return shipping, said method comprising:

receiving by an online merchandise return computer system a merchandise return request by a consumer to return to a merchant at least one item of merchandise, wherein said merchandise return request is input by the consumer via a client computer, wherein said consumer is a user of the online merchandise return computer system, and wherein the merchandise return request corresponds to an identifier of a credit card account; [[and]]

processing said merchandise return request according to a set of return policy rules input to the online merchandise return computer system by [[a]]the merchant, wherein a subset of the return policy rules input by the merchant comprises:

a set of return questions, and

a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions;

receive an indication of receipt of the item of merchandise by the merchant; and in response to receiving the indication of receipt of the item of merchandise by the merchant, generate an indication of a credit to the credit card account.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 39, wherein the subset of the return policy rules input by the merchant further comprises:

a set of return response rules, each return response rule corresponding to at least one of said anticipated return question responses.

41. (Original) The method of Claim 40, wherein each return response rule comprising a set of instructions to direct said computer system to perform an action to process the return request.

42. (Original) The method of Claim 41, wherein each set of return questions comprising a first return question and a set of subsequent return questions, said first return question having a corresponding set of anticipated first return question responses and each of said subsequent return questions having a corresponding set of anticipated subsequent return question responses.
43. (Original) The method of Claim 42, the method further comprising:
selecting from the return policy rules set by the merchant the return questions;
and
displaying to the user a first selected return question.
44. (Original) The method of Claim 43, the method further comprising:
receiving user input of a return question answer.
45. (Original) The method of Claim 44, the method further comprising:
comparing said return question answer to each of the anticipated first return question responses.
46. (Original) The method of Claim 45 the method further comprising:
identifying an anticipated first return question response that matches said return question answer.
47. (Original) The method of Claim 46, the method further comprising:
directing the computer system to process the return request in accordance with the return question response rules that correspond to the anticipated first return question response that matches said return question answer.
48. (Original) The method of Claim 47, wherein the return policy rules further comprising a selection of carriers and services with which a consumer can ship a return package.

49. (Original) The method of Claim 48, the method further comprising:
calculating a shipping rate for a package specified by the return request of the consumer for each of selected services offered by each of selected carriers according to a set of pricing rules for each of the selected carriers for each of the selected services.
50. (Original) The method of Claim 49, the method further comprising:
generating a display of an interactive graphic comparison of shipping rates for the return request for shipping the particular package for each of the selected services offered by each of the selected carriers.
51. (Original) The method of Claim 50 wherein the interactive graphic shipping rate comparison display comprising an array.
52. (Original) The method of Claim 51 wherein said array comprising a plurality of cells.
53. (Original) The method of Claim 52 wherein each of said cells comprising an intersection of a delivery date and time for a particular carrier for a particular service.
54. (Original) The method of Claim 53, the method further comprising:
receiving as a return order user input of a selection of one of the cells of the array.
55. (Original) The method of Claim 54, the method further comprising:
generating an internal system tracking number for the return order; and
saving said internal system tracking number for the return order in a database.
56. (Original) The method of Claim 55, the method further comprising:
generating a graphic representation of a shipping label corresponding to the return order; and

displaying the graphic representation of the shipping label on a display monitor connected to a computer accessible by the consumer.

57. (Original) The method of Claim 56, the method further comprising:
generating a set of printable shipping label data in response to a shipping label print request by the consumer.
58. (Original) The method of Claim 57, the method further comprising:
sending in response to a user request to print a shipping label the set of printable shipping label data to a printer connected to the computer accessible by the user.
59. (Original) The method of Claim 58, wherein each return order with a tracking number is characterized by a shipping status, the method further comprising:
generating a tracking report record depicting the shipping status of a return order in response to a user tracking report request for said return order.
60. (Currently Amended) A method using a computer for online merchandise return shipping, said method comprising:
~~saving a set of return policy rules input by a merchant in a database, wherein a subset of the set of return policy rules input by the merchant comprises:~~
~~a set of return questions, and~~
~~a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions; and~~
receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one an item of merchandise, wherein the merchandise return request corresponds to an indication of a credit card account for crediting a refund amount for return of the item of merchandise;
receive an indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise returned by the consumer; and
in response to receiving the indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise, generate a credit to the credit card account.

61. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 60, said method further comprising:
processing said merchandise return request according to ~~[[said]]~~a set of return policy rules, wherein the set of return policy rules comprises:

a set of return questions, and

a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions.

62. (Currently Amended) A method using a computer for online merchandise return shipping, said method comprising:

collecting a set of return policy rules input by a merchant, ~~wherein a subset of the set of return policy rules input by the merchant comprises:~~

~~a set of return questions, and~~

~~a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions; and;~~

saving said set of return policy rules in a database;

receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return to a merchant an item of merchandise; and

in response to the merchandise return request, generating a display to the consumer of a set of carriers as identified by the merchant according to the return policy rules.

63. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 62, said method further comprising:
~~receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise~~generating a display of rates for return shipment of the item of merchandise by each delivery service provided by each carrier of the set of carriers.

64. (Original) The method of Claim 63, said method further comprising
processing said merchandise return request according to said set of return policy rules.

65. (Previously Presented) A method using a computer for online merchandise return shipping, said method comprising:

- receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise;

- generating in response to said merchandise return request a display of an interactive graphic comparison of shipping rates for the return request for shipping a package containing an item of merchandise to be returned, said display showing a shipping rate for each of a set of services offered by each of set of carriers, said carriers and services selected by the computer system for display according to a set of return policy rules input by a merchant, wherein a subset of the set of return policy rules input by the merchant comprises:

- a set of return questions, and

- a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions; and

- processing said merchandise return request according to the set of return policy rules input by the merchant.

66. (Withdrawn) A method using a computer for online merchandise return shipping, said method comprising saving a set of return policy rules input by a merchant in a database as a three-dimensional situation response matrix, said matrix comprising:

- a first dimension defining a set of return questions; a second dimension defining, for each return question, a set of return question responses corresponding to the return question; and

- a third dimension defining, for each return question response for each return question, a set of instructions to the computer system corresponding to the return question response corresponding to the return question.

67. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 66, said method further comprising:

- receiving a merchandise return request input by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise; and

scripting an interactive exchange with the consumer in response to said merchandise return request according to the three-dimensional situation response matrix.

68. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 67, said method further comprising:
displaying a first question from said set of return questions;
receiving a first answer input by the consumer in response to said first question;
selecting from the set of return question responses corresponding to the first question a return question response that corresponds to the first answer; and
directing the computer system to execute each instruction in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the first answer.

69. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 68, wherein one of the instructions in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the first answer is to ask a next question from said set of return questions.

70. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 69, said method further comprising:
displaying the next question from said set of return questions;
receiving a next answer input by the consumer in response to said next question;
selecting from the set of return question responses corresponding to the next question a return question response that corresponds to the next answer; and
directing the computer system to execute each instruction in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the next answer.

71. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 68, said method further comprising:
processing said merchandise return request according to the set of instructions corresponding to the return question responses corresponding to each answer by the consumer to each return question asked by the computer system.

72. (Withdrawn) A method using a computer for online merchandise return shipping, said method comprising:

- displaying a question from a set of return questions;
- receiving an answer input by a consumer in response to said question;
- selecting from a set of return question responses corresponding to the question a return question response that corresponds to the answer; and
- directing the computer system to execute each instruction in a set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the answer.

73. (Withdrawn) A method using a computer for online merchandise return shipping, said method comprising:

- processing a merchandise return request by a consumer according to a set of instructions that correspond to a set of return question responses that correspond to each answer by the consumer to each return question asked by the computer system.

74. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 73, said method further comprising:

- recognizing merchandise to be returned by the consumer according to product categories and product subcategories.

75. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 74, said method further comprising:

- executing exception instructions for merchandise comprising an exception product category.

76. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 74, said method further comprising:

- executing exception instructions for merchandise comprising an exception product subcategory.

77. (Currently Amended) A computer product for online merchandise return shipping, said computer product having instructions for:

- receiving by an online merchandise return computer system a merchandise return request by a consumer to return to a merchant at least one item of

merchandise that the consumer purchased from the merchant using an online computer system, wherein said merchandise return request is input by the consumer via a client computer, wherein said consumer is a user of the online merchandise return computer system, wherein the merchandise return request comprises an indication of ~~at least one~~the item of merchandise, and wherein the merchandise return request corresponds to an identifier of a credit card account ~~in a list of a plurality of items of merchandise that the consumer purchased from the merchant using an online computer system; [[and]]~~

processing said merchandise return request according to a set of return policy rules input to the online merchandise return computer system by a merchant;

receiving an indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise returned by the consumer; and

in response to receiving the indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise, credit a return amount to the credit card account.

78. (Original) The computer product of Claim 77, wherein a subset of the return policy rules input by the merchant comprising:

a set of return questions;

a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions; and

a set of return response rules, each return response rule corresponding to at least one of said anticipated return question responses.

79. (Original) The computer product of Claim 78, wherein each return response rule comprising a set of instructions to direct said computer system to perform an action to process the return request.

80. (Original) The computer product of Claim 79, wherein each set of return questions comprising a first return question and a set of subsequent return questions, said first return question having a corresponding set of anticipated first return question responses and each of said subsequent return questions having a corresponding set of anticipated subsequent return question responses.

81. (Original) The computer product of Claim 80, the computer product having further instructions for:

selecting from the return policy rules set by the merchant the return questions;

and

displaying to the user a first selected return question.

82. (Original) The computer product of Claim 81, the computer product having further instructions for:

receiving user input of a return question answer.

83. (Original) The computer product of Claim 82, the computer product having further instructions for:

comparing said return question answer to each of the anticipated first return question responses.

84. (Original) The computer product of Claim 83, the computer product having further instructions for:

identifying an anticipated first return question response that matches said return question answer.

85. (Original) The computer product of Claim 84, the computer product having further instructions for:

directing the computer system to process the return request in accordance with the return question response rules that correspond to the anticipated first return question response that matches said return question answer.

86. (Original) The computer product of Claim 85, wherein the return policy rules further comprising a selection of carriers and services with which a consumer can ship a return package.

87. (Original) The computer product of Claim 86, the computer product having further instructions for:

calculating a shipping rate for a package specified by the return request of the consumer for each of selected services offered by each of selected carriers according to a set of pricing rules for each of the selected carriers for each of the selected services.

88. (Original) The computer product of Claim 87, the computer product having further instructions for:

generating a display of an interactive graphic comparison of shipping rates for the return request for shipping the particular package for each of the selected services offered by each of the selected carriers.

89. (Original) The computer product of Claim 88 wherein the interactive graphic shipping rate comparison display comprising an array.

90. (Original) The computer product of Claim 89 wherein said array comprising a plurality of cells.

91. (Original) The computer product of Claim 90 wherein each of said cells comprising an intersection of a delivery date and time for a particular carrier for a particular service.

92. (Original) The computer product of Claim 91, the computer product having further instructions for:

receiving as a return order user input of a selection of one of the cells of the array.

93. (Original) The computer product of Claim 92, the computer product having further instructions for:

generating an internal system tracking number for the return order; and
saving said internal system tracking number for the return order in a database.

94. (Original) The computer product of Claim 93, the computer product having further instructions for:

generating a graphic representation of a shipping label corresponding to the return order; and

displaying the graphic representation of the shipping label on a display monitor connected to a computer accessible by the consumer.

95. (Original) The computer product of Claim 94, the computer product having further instructions for:

generating a set of printable shipping label data in response to a shipping label print request by the consumer.

96. (Original) The computer product of Claim 95, the computer product having further instructions for:

sending in response to a user request to print a shipping label the set of printable shipping label data to a printer connected to the computer accessible by the user.

97. (Original) The computer product of Claim 96, wherein each return order with a tracking number is characterized by a shipping status, the computer product having further instructions for:

generating a tracking report record depicting the shipping status of a return order in response to a user tracking report request for said return order.

98. (Currently Amended) A computer product for online merchandise return shipping, said computer product having instructions for:

saving a set of return policy rules input by a merchant in a database, wherein a subset of the set of return policy rules input by the merchant comprises:

a set of return questions, and

a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions; and

receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return ~~at least one an~~
item of merchandise, wherein the merchandise return request comprises an indication
of ~~at least one the~~ item of merchandise ~~in a list of a plurality of items of merchandise that~~
the consumer purchased from the merchant using an online computer system, and
wherein the merchandise return request corresponds to an indication of a credit card
account for crediting a refund amount for return of the item of merchandise;

receiving an indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise
returned by the consumer; and

in response to receiving the indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of
merchandise, generating a credit to the credit card account.

99. (Original) The computer product of Claim 98, the computer product having further instructions for:

processing said merchandise return request according to said set of return policy rules.

100. (Currently Amended) A computer product for online merchandise return shipping, said computer product having instructions for:

generating a graphic user interface for input of return policy rules, wherein the graphic user interface is adapted for receiving input identifying an item as an exception to standard return policy rules;

collecting a set of return policy rules input by a merchant using the graphic user interface, wherein the set of return policy rules comprises an identification of at least one item as a policy rule exception; and

saving the set of return policy rules in a database.

101. (Original) The computer product of Claim 100, the computer product having further instructions for:

receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise.

102. (Original) The computer product of Claim 101, the computer product having further instructions for:

processing said merchandise return request according to said set of return policy rules.

103. (Previously Presented) A computer product for online merchandise return shipping, said computer product having instructions for:

receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise;

generating in response to said merchandise return request a display of an interactive graphic comparison of shipping rates for the return request for shipping a package containing an item of merchandise to be returned, said display showing a shipping rate for each service of a set of services offered by each carrier of a set of carriers, wherein the set of carriers and the set of services are selected by the computer system for display according to a set of return policy rules input by a merchant; and

processing said merchandise return request according to the set of return policy rules input by the merchant.

104. (Withdrawn) A computer product for online merchandise return shipping, said computer product having instructions for saving a set of return policy rules input by a merchant in a database as a three-dimensional situation response matrix, said matrix comprising:

a first dimension defining a set of return questions;

a second dimension defining, for each return question, a set of return question responses corresponding to the return question; and

a third dimension defining, for each return question response for each return question, a set of instructions to the computer system corresponding to the return question response corresponding to the return question.

105. (Withdrawn) The computer product of Claim 104, the computer product having further instructions for:

receiving a merchandise return request input by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise; and

scripting an interactive exchange with the consumer in response to said merchandise return request according to the three-dimensional situation response matrix.

106. (Withdrawn) The computer product of Claim 105, the computer product having further instructions for:

- displaying a first question from said set of return questions;
- receiving a first answer input by the consumer in response to said first question;
- selecting from the set of return question responses corresponding to the first question a return question response that corresponds to the first answer; and
- directing the computer system to execute each instruction in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the first answer.

107. (Withdrawn) The computer product of Claim 106, wherein one of the instructions in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the first answer is to ask a next question from said set of return questions.

108. (Withdrawn) The computer product of Claim 107, the computer product having further instructions for:

- displaying the next question from said set of return questions;
- receiving a next answer input by the consumer in response to said next question;
- selecting from the set of return question responses corresponding to the next question a return question response that corresponds to the next answer; and
- directing the computer system to execute each instruction in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the next answer.

109. (Withdrawn) The computer product of Claim 106, the computer product having further instructions for:

processing said merchandise return request according to the set of instructions corresponding to the return question responses corresponding to each answer by the consumer to each return question asked by the computer system.

110. (Withdrawn) A computer product for online merchandise return shipping, said computer product having instructions for:

displaying a question from a set of return questions;

receiving an answer input by a consumer in response to said question;

selecting from a set of return question responses corresponding to the question a return question response that corresponds to the answer; and

directing the computer system to execute each instruction in a set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the answer.

111. (Withdrawn) A computer product for online merchandise return shipping, said computer product having instructions for:

processing a merchandise return request by a consumer according to a set of instructions that correspond to a set of return question responses that correspond to each answer by the consumer to each return question asked by the computer system.

112. (Withdrawn) The computer product of Claim 111, the computer product having further instructions for:

recognizing merchandise to be returned by the consumer according to product categories and product subcategories.

113. (Withdrawn) The computer product of Claim 112, the computer product having further instructions for:

executing exception instructions for merchandise comprising an exception product category.

114. (Withdrawn) The computer product of Claim 112, the computer product having further instructions for:

executing exception instructions for merchandise comprising an exception product subcategory.

115. (Currently Amended) A computer system for online merchandise return shipping, said computer system comprising:

a set of instructions for presenting to a user a list of items of merchandise previously purchased from a merchant by the user;

a set of instructions for receiving by an online merchandise return computer system a merchandise return request by a consumer to return to the merchant at least one item of merchandise, wherein said merchandise return request is input by the consumer via a client computer, wherein said consumer is a user of the online merchandise return computer system, [[and]] wherein the merchandise return request comprises an indication of an item on the list of items, and wherein the merchandise return request corresponds to an indication of a credit card account for crediting a refund amount for return of the item of merchandise; [[and]]

a set of instructions for processing said merchandise return request according to a set of return policy rules input to the online merchandise return computer system by a merchant;

a set of instructions for receiving an indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise returned by the consumer; and

a set of instructions for, in response to receiving the indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise, generating a credit to the credit card account.

116. (Original) The computer system of Claim 115, wherein a subset of the return policy rules input by the merchant comprising:

a set of return questions;

a set of anticipated return question responses corresponding to each of said return questions; and

a set of return response rules, each return response rule corresponding to at least one of said anticipated return question responses.

117. (Original) The computer system of Claim 116, wherein each return response rule comprising a set of instructions to direct said computer system to perform an action to process the return request.

118. (Original) The computer system of Claim 117, wherein each set of return questions comprising a first return question and a set of subsequent return questions, said first return question having a corresponding set of anticipated first return question responses and each of said subsequent return questions having a corresponding set of anticipated subsequent return question responses.

119. (Original) The computer system of Claim 118, the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for selecting from the return policy rules set by the merchant the return questions; and

a set of instructions for displaying to the user a first selected return question.

120. (Original) The computer system of Claim 119, the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for receiving user input of a return question answer.

121. (Original) The computer system of Claim 120, the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for comparing said return question answer to each of the anticipated first return question responses.

122. (Original) The computer system of Claim 121 the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for identifying an anticipated first return question response that matches said return question answer.

123. (Original) The computer system of Claim 122, the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for directing the computer system to process the return request in accordance with the return question response rules that correspond to the anticipated first return question response that matches said return question answer.

124. (Original) The computer system of Claim 123, wherein the return policy rules further comprising a selection of carriers and services with which a consumer can ship a return package.

125. (Original) The computer system of Claim 124, the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for calculating a shipping rate for a package specified by the return request of the consumer for each of selected services offered by each of selected carriers according to a set of pricing rules for each of the selected carriers for each of the selected services.

126. (Original) The computer system of Claim 125, the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for generating a display of an interactive graphic comparison of shipping rates for the return request for shipping the particular package for each of the selected services offered by each of the selected carriers.

127. (Original) The computer system of Claim 126 wherein the interactive graphic shipping rate comparison display comprising an array.

128. (Original) The computer system of Claim 127 wherein said array comprising a plurality of cells.

129. (Original) The computer system of Claim 128 wherein each of said cells comprising an intersection of a delivery date and time for a particular carrier for a particular service.

130. (Original) The computer system of Claim 129, the computer system further comprising:

- a set of instructions for receiving as a return order user input of a selection of one of the cells of the array.

131. (Original) The computer system of Claim 130, the computer system further comprising:

- a set of instructions for generating an internal system tracking number for the return order; and

- a set of instructions for saving said internal system tracking number for the return order in a database.

132. (Original) The computer system of Claim 131, the computer system further comprising:

- a set of instructions for generating a graphic representation of a shipping label corresponding to the return order; and

- a set of instructions for displaying the graphic representation of the shipping label on a display monitor connected to a computer accessible by the consumer.

133. (Original) The computer system of Claim 132, the computer system further comprising:

- a set of instructions for generating a set of printable shipping label data in response to a shipping label print request by the consumer.

134. (Original) The computer system of Claim 133, the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for sending in response to a user request to print a shipping label the set of printable shipping label data to a printer connected to the computer accessible by the user.

135. (Original) The computer system of Claim 134, wherein each return order with a tracking number is characterized by a shipping status, the computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for generating a tracking report record depicting the shipping status of a return order in response to a user tracking report request for said return order.

136. (Currently Amended) A computer system for online merchandise return shipping, said computer system comprising:

a set of instructions for presenting to a user a list of items of merchandise previously purchased by the user;

a set of instructions for saving a set of return policy rules input by a merchant in a database; and

a set of instructions for receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise, wherein the merchandise return request comprises an indication of at least one item on the list of items, and wherein the merchandise return request further comprises an indication of a credit card account to which a return amount should be credited;

a set of instructions for receiving an indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise returned by the consumer; and

a set of instructions for, in response to receiving the indication of receipt by the merchant of the item of merchandise, generating a credit of the return amount to the credit card account.

137. (Original) The computer system of Claim 136, said computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for processing said merchandise return request according to said set of return policy rules.

138. (Currently Amended) A computer system for online merchandise return shipping, said computer system comprising:

a set of instructions for collecting a set of return policy rules input by a merchant, wherein the return policy rules input by the merchant comprises a set of carriers selected by the merchant for shipping returned items;

a set of instructions for saving said set of return policy rules in a database

a set of instructions for presenting to a user a list of items of merchandise previously purchased from the merchant and shipped by the merchant to the user;

[[and]]

a set of instructions for receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return an at least one item of merchandise;

a set of instructions for displaying to the user, in response to the merchandise return request, the set of carriers selected by the merchant for shipping returned items;

receiving an identification by the user of a carrier from the set of carriers, and a delivery service provided by the carrier, for return shipping of the at least one item of merchandise to a return location for the merchant; and

a set of instructions for printing a machine-readable carrier shipping label for delivery of the at least one item of merchandise to the return location for the merchant.

139. (Previously Presented) The computer system of Claim 138, said computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise, wherein the merchandise return request comprises an indication of at least one item on the list of items.

140. (Original) The computer system of Claim 139, said computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for processing said merchandise return request according to said set of return policy rules.

141. (Previously Presented) A computer system for online merchandise return shipping, said computer system comprising:

a set of instructions for receiving a merchandise return request by a consumer to return to a merchant an at least one item of merchandise;

a set of instructions for selecting a set of carriers and a set of delivery services offered by the set of carriers as potential carriers and delivery services for shipping a package containing the at least one item of merchandise to be returned, wherein the set of carriers and the set of delivery services are selected according to a set of return policy rules previously input by the merchant;

a set of instructions for generating, in response to said merchandise return request, a display of an interactive graphic comparison of shipping rates for the return request for shipping the package containing the at least one item of merchandise to be returned, said display showing a shipping rate for each delivery service of the set of services offered by each carrier of the set of carriers; and

a set of instructions for processing said merchandise return request according to the set of return policy rules input by the merchant.

142. (Withdrawn) A computer system for online merchandise return shipping, said computer system comprising a set of instructions for saving a set of return policy rules input by a merchant in a database as a three-dimensional situation response matrix, said matrix comprising:

a first dimension defining a set of return questions;

a second dimension defining, for each return question, a set of return question responses corresponding to the return question; and

a third dimension defining, for each return question response for each return question, a set of instructions to the computer system corresponding to the return question response corresponding to the return question.

143. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 142, said computer system further comprising:

- a set of instructions for receiving a merchandise return request input by a consumer to return at least one item of merchandise; and

- a set of instructions for scripting an interactive exchange with the consumer in response to said merchandise return request according to the three-dimensional situation response matrix.

144. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 143, said computer system further comprising:

- a set of instructions for displaying a first question from said set of return questions;

- a set of instructions for receiving a first answer input by the consumer in response to said first question;

- a set of instructions for selecting from the set of return question responses corresponding to the first question a return question response that corresponds to the first answer; and

- a set of instructions for directing the computer system to execute each instruction in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the first answer.

145. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 144, wherein one of the instructions in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the first answer is to ask a next question from said set of return questions.

146. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 145, said computer system further comprising:

- a set of instructions for displaying the next question from said set of return questions;

- a set of instructions for receiving a next answer input by the consumer in response to said next question;

a set of instructions for selecting from the set of return question responses corresponding to the next question a return question response that corresponds to the next answer; and

a set of instructions for directing the computer system to execute each instruction in the set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the next answer.

147. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 144, said computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for processing said merchandise return request according to the set of instructions corresponding to the return question responses corresponding to each answer by the consumer to each return question asked by the computer system.

148. (Withdrawn) A computer system for online merchandise return shipping, said computer system comprising:

a set of instructions for displaying a question from a set of return questions;

a set of instructions for receiving an answer input by a consumer in response to said question;

a set of instructions for selecting from a set of return question responses corresponding to the question a return question response that corresponds to the answer; and

a set of instructions for directing the computer system to execute each instruction in a set of instructions corresponding to the return question response that corresponds to the answer.

149. (Withdrawn) A computer system for online merchandise return shipping, said computer system comprising:

a set of instructions for processing a merchandise return request by a consumer according to a set of instructions that correspond to a set of return question responses that correspond to each answer by the consumer to each return question asked by the computer system.

150. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 149, said computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for recognizing merchandise to be returned by the consumer according to product categories and product subcategories.

151. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 150, said computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for executing exception instructions for merchandise comprising an exception product category.

152. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 150, said computer system further comprising:

a set of instructions for executing exception instructions for merchandise comprising an exception product subcategory.

153. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

receive from a second computer system a request to rate shipment of a particular package by a plurality of carriers.

154. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

calculate a plurality of shipment rates for shipping a particular package in response to a request to rate shipment received from a second computer system.

155. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 153, wherein each of the plurality of shipment rates corresponds to one of a plurality of carriers shipping the particular package according to one of a plurality of services offered by the carrier.

156. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

receive from a second computer system a request to process return shipment of a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers.

157. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 156, said computer system further programmed to:

generate a response to the second computer system comprising a status of the request.

158. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 157, wherein the status comprises one of a plurality of error conditions or a successful condition.

159. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

calculate a shipment rate for shipping a particular package in response to a request received from a second computer system to process return shipment of a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers.

160. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

generate as a response to a second computer system a shipping label for shipping a particular package in response to a request received from the second computer system to prepare a shipping label for shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers.

161. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 160, said computer system further programmed to:

send the shipping label response to the second computer system.

162. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

generate as a response to a second computer system a merchandise return label for return shipping of a particular package in response to a request received from the second computer system to prepare a merchandise return label for return shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers.

163. (Withdrawn) The computer system of Claim 162, said computer system further programmed to:

send the merchandise return label response to the second computer system.

164. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

designate as received a status of a particular return record in a database in response to a request received from a second computer system to identify as received a particular package, wherein the particular return record corresponds to the particular package.

165. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

obtain in response to a request received from a second computer system to process return shipment of a particular package a shipping status for the particular package from a carrier computer system.

166. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

store in a database a return record corresponding to a particular package in response to a request received from a second computer system to process return shipment of the particular package by one of a plurality of carriers.

167. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

generate a request to process return shipment of a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers; and

insert into the request a digital address of a second computer, said digital address corresponding to a location of said second computer in a global communications network.

168. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

generate a request to prepare a return shipping label for shipping a particular package by one of a plurality of carriers; and

insert into the request a digital address of a second computer, said digital address corresponding to a location of said second computer in a global communications network.

169. (Withdrawn) A merchandise return computer system, said computer system programmed to:

generate a request to prepare a merchandise return label for processing shipment of a particular package; and

insert into the request a digital address of a second computer, said digital address corresponding to a location of said second computer in a global communications network.